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## II. ON THE MALALENGARA.

*Sea shore near Tavoy, Dec. 20, 1852.*

SINCE writing to you last, the first number of the third volume of the Journal has reached me, in which, concerning the *Malalengara*, you say : "The attention of those in a situation to investigate the point, should be directed to the inquiry whether or not the text translated by Mr. Bennett is itself an original." I read the book many years ago, and have ever regarded it as a compilation from the *Pitakapa*, and Buddhaghosa's commentary, the *Aṭhakathā*, from which Mr. Turnour translated a brief life of Gautama, published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, in 1838. The *Malalengara* is a Burman translation from the Pali, interspersed with portions of the original text; and wherever Mr. Turnour has given the text from which he translated, the two are precisely alike. Discrepancies in the English translations were to be anticipated, when made from different versions, by different persons, in different countries; but no discrepancies, however great, are sufficient to prove that the original text was not the same. For example, Mr. Turnour translates, from the Pali, the first words of Gautama on attaining Buddhahood, thus : "Performing my pilgrimage through the eternity of countless existences, in sorrow have I unremittingly sought, in vain, the artificer of the abode (of the passions), i. e. the human frame. Now, O artificer, thou art found. Henceforth, no receptacle of sin shalt thou form, thy frames (literally ribs) broken, thy ridge-pole shattered. The soul (or mind) emancipated from liability to regeneration (by transmigration), has annihilated the dominion of the passions." The same words, in the translation made from the Burman, read : "Boodh kept saying to himself, 'You have endured the misery of the whole round of transmigration; now you have arrived at infinite wisdom, which is the highway to annihilation.'" Mr. Turnour, translating from the Pali, renders Gautama's last words thus : "Now, O bhikkhus! I am about to conjure you (for the last time) : perishable things are transitory; without procrastination earn (*nibban-an*)."<sup>1</sup> In another place, he says : "Qualify yourselves (for *nibban-an*)."<sup>2</sup> The rendering from the Burman reads : "My beloved priests, the state of being leads to destruction; do you remember this, do not forget this, I charge you."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Turnour gives the Pali text of both these passages, both are preserved in the *Malalengara*, and they agree with each other perfectly in every letter; though the English versions have little in common.

You remark on page 160 : "According to this, Pya-da-tha, or Piyadasi, was Asoka's father." The Pali text of this passage is : *Anàgate Piyàdàso nàma Kumàro chhattan ussàpetwà Asoko dam-*

*maraja bavisyati*, i. e. Hereafter, a prince called Piyādāsa, bearing the umbrella, will become Asoka, king of the Law.

From which it appears that Piyādāsa was Asoka's proper name; and it is worthy of remark, in passing, that in the inscription found on a block of granite at Byrath, the name is written *Piyadasa*, with the same vowels that accompany the word in the *Malalengara*.

I have never met with the whole of the Pali original of the *Malalengara*, but the verbatim extracts from the works of Buddhaghosa, who lived in the fourth or fifth century, which occur in the Burman version, are sufficient to prove that the book was written subsequent to that period. It was probably compiled several centuries subsequently, for the *Athakathà*, Buddhaghosa's commentary, is referred to as an old established work, of unquestionable authority. The author manifestly confined himself to extracts from books, for his authorities, in making his compilation, for in one instance he does not adopt an addition, though found in the "*Jata-Athakathà*", because it is not found in any other part of the *Athakathà*. Had he admitted unwritten tradition into his work, he would not have rejected a statement in the *Jata*, because that would carry with it higher authority than any thing unwritten. The remark seems to imply, also, that, when he did not draw his information from the *Pitakapa*, he confined himself to the *Athakathà*.

The name, *Mālālankāra*, signifies an Ornament of Flowers, from *lankāra*, an ornament, which occurs as the second member of two or three other names of Buddhist books in Ceylon; and *mālā*, a flower, in Pali usage, though the Sanskrit *mālā* signifies a garland. The author says that the virtues and glories of Gautama adorn the work like ornaments; and hence the name. The reference to fire-arms\* shows that the translation was made into Burman, after their use was known in Burmah; but it proves nothing in relation to the Pali text, for the Burmese translators are not scrupulous in their renderings. A hyperbolical description of the Himalaya, in a Burman version of the *Wesantara*, says that the dorian-trees grow there as tall as palms; while the dorian is not indigenous north of the Straits of Malacca, nor cultivated north of Tavoy. In the Pali text, the word rendered dorian is *asiti*, identical, probably, with the Sanskrit *asitā*, the indigo plant.

In closing, I would remark that the Pali names in this letter are spelt on the principles adopted by Turnour, so that the differences between his names and mine show a difference in the original texts from which we derive them.

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\* See *Journal Am. Or. Soc.* vol. iii. p. 32.